

Part 9. Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind.

§ 143B-163. Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind – creation, powers and duties.

(a) There is hereby created the Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind of the Department of Health and Human Services. This Committee shall make a continuing study of the entire range of problems and needs of the blind and visually impaired population of this State and make specific recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Services as to how these may be solved or alleviated through legislative action. The Committee shall examine national trends and programs of other states, as well as programs and priorities in North Carolina. Because of the cost of treating persons who lose their vision, the Committee's role shall also include studying and making recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Services concerning methods of preventing blindness and restoring vision.

(b) The Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind shall advise all State boards, commissions, agencies, divisions, departments, schools, corporations, or other State-administered associations or entities, including the secretary, director and members of said boards, commissions, agencies, divisions, departments, schools, et cetera, on the needs of the citizens of the State of North Carolina who are now or will become visually impaired.

(c) The Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind shall also advise every State board, commission, agency, division, department, school, corporation, or other State-administered associations or entity concerning sight conservation programs that it supervises, administers or controls.

(d) All State boards, commissions, agencies, divisions, departments, schools, corporations, or other State-administered associations or entities including the secretary, director and members of said State boards, agencies, departments, et cetera, which supervise, administer or control any program for or affecting the citizens of the State of North Carolina who are now or will become visually impaired shall inform the Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind of any proposed change in policy, program, budget, rule, or regulation which will affect the citizens of North Carolina who are now or will become visually impaired. Said board, commission, et cetera, shall allow the Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind, prior to passage, unless such change is made pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.1, an opportunity to object to the change and present information and proposals on behalf of the citizens of North Carolina who are now or will become visually impaired. This subsection shall also apply to all sight conservation programs of the State of North Carolina.

(e) Nothing in this statute shall prohibit a board, commission, agency, division, department, et cetera, from implementing any change after allowing the Consumer and Advocacy Advisory Committee for the Blind an opportunity to object and propose alternatives. Shifts in budget items within a program or administrative changes in a program required in the day-to-day operation of an agency, department, or school, et cetera, shall be allowed without prior consultation with said Committee. (1977, c. 842, s. 1; c. 1050; 1979, c. 973, s. 1; 1987, c. 827, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 44; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2000-121, s. 32.)